

**Andrew Jackson to [Samuel Swartwout?], September 27, 1829, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson.
Edited by John Spencer Bassett.**

TO SAMUEL SWARTWOUT.1

1 This letter was addressed to "Mr. S—N. Y."

Washington, September 27, 1829.

My D'r sir, In your letter of the 21st instant, marked confidential you are pleased to inform me, that information has reached you through a channel on which reliance can be placed, that a "few ladies of this place, Washington with a Reverend Gentleman at their head, has formed a determination to put Mrs. Eaton out of society, and who for that purpose are circulating by themselves, and *their secrete agents*, the most foul and malicious slanders, some, if not all, I know from investigation to be basely false, and that my family have attached themselves to this secrete inquisition, who are to admit, or not admit into society in this place, such Ladies, and only such as they may think worthy", and enquire, *and hope*, it is not true, as it respects my family. To which *I answer, as to my family I believe, and trust, it is not true*, and pledge myself, so far as my advice can govern, that it shall not be the case.

you do me but Justice when you say, that I took major Eaton into my Cabinet of my own free choice, *where*, but for his friendship for (you) [me] he would not have gone into it, that all the Cabinet was harmonious in the whole selection, and to abandon him, before *all sides are heard* would be so injurious to him, and to me, that my friends believe I am incapable of such a course. *And you have so declared, that Eaton is the last man on earth I ought, or would abandon*. You have Judged rightly of me. The world in truth, cannot say

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that I ever abandoned a friend, without on such grounds, that a righteous course founded upon the principles of that gospel, which I not only profess to believe, but do religiously believe, or when they abandoned me without cause.

You know my opinion of the purity of Eaton. I believe, and ever have believed that his morale character was without a blemish, and had the other day the pleasure to hear the clergyman who give currency to the *tale* of the dead Doctor and the Revd. Gentleman from Philadelphia to whom you allude declare in the presence of the Sec of State, of the Treasury War, Navy, atto. Genl, Postmaster General, Major Lewis, and Major Andrew Donelson, that in all their enquiries, they were free to declare, there was nothing to impeach the moral character of Major Eaton, and I am sure from the Testimonials I have seen, that there is nothing that *can*, or *ought to attach the least stain upon his virtue*. I am free to declare to you, that I do think major Eaton, and Mrs. Eaton more unjustly, and cruelly slander[ed] than history has ever recorded in any other instance and a short time will prove it, and all this by tales circulated in the most secrete manner and under strict confidence. How then could the unjust world for a moment suppose I would abandon him—I would soner *abandon life*. I have long knew the vallue of the man, and his high standing both in New York, Pensylvania, and the west, and as far as Justice, and truth, will authorise, I will sustain him.

You could not shudder more at the depravity of morales, than I have, that would sanction a system, that a clergyman detailing the tale which he says he received from a deceased Doctor, and who has been dead nearly if not upward of six years, unsupported by any other testimony, should be sufficient to destroy female character. I am too well acquainted with the religious part of our country and the high minded and honorable, to believe the moment this slander is placed before the world, and the manner of its being circulated, but, the whole people will spurn the wicked slander, and prostrate the slanderers.

I will only now add—That if this combination of which you speak, is really in existence, The virtuous, morale and religious world will begin and inquire, by what authority These ladies

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with their clergyman at their head has assumed for themselves this holy alliance and secrete inquisition to pass in secrete upon the conduct of others, and say, who shall, and who shall not be permitted into society. If it does exist, the inquiry will go farther, it may extend to the inquiry into their own immaculate characters, and their divine right to assume such powers, and I would not for the Presidency be in their places. The indignation is arising here, as well as with you, and the moment it is known, must arise over the christianised world—for the matron, the daughter, the father will all cry out, where is the safety for our character, if it is placed within the pale of a vindictive clergyman, who from the act, shews he has no religion, who may get displeased with a fair and virtuous female, who has nothing to do, but put forth the saying of a dead man, and the female character is gone forever. I can assure you that the morales and virtue of our country is not prepared to support or countenance such things as this, and I am happy to hear, that the indignation of your citizens has become so much aroused at the mere recital of the conduct here. it will have a good effect, it must in the end, put down gossiping here, and chasten society every where, and give a greater respect to female character, and an utter detestation of slandere[r]s. Then will society enjoy peace, and harmony, and character be secure from secrete and unfounded calumnies— *our society wants purging here* . When you write to your distant friends present me to them kindly and believe me yr friend.

[*Indorsement* :] papers to No. 15th were handed to Mr. Van Buren